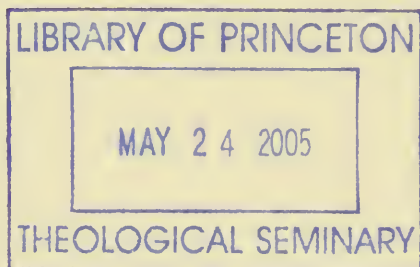


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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN WHIG AND PHILOSOPHIC SOCIETIES

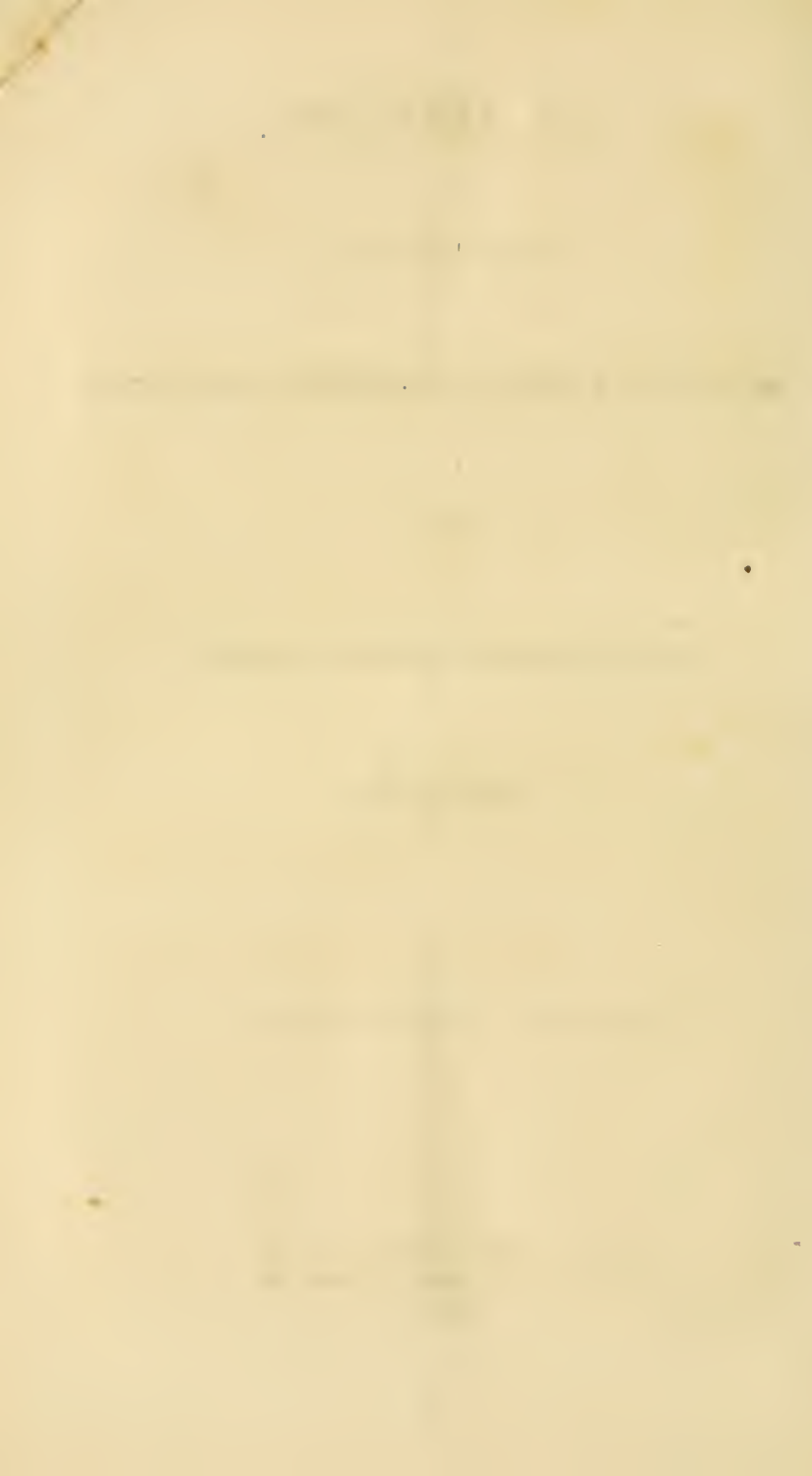
OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

September 26, 1837.

✓
By SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD, LL.D.

PRINCETON:
PUBLISHED BY GEORGE THOMPSON.
1845.



EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CLIOSOPHIC SOCIETY, SEPTEMBER 27th, 1837.

RESOLVED, That a committee be appointed to present the thanks of the Society to the HON. SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD, for the learned and eloquent address delivered by him yesterday ; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

PROF. MACLEAN, }
PROF. A. B. DOD, } *Committee.*

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RICHARD S. FIELD, Esq. }
REV. DR. BRECKINRIDGE, } *Committee.*
WM. C. H. BROWN, Esq. }

ADDRESS.

You have called me from the discharge of other duties to address you. The attempt to comply with your request, has renewed my impression of the ties by which I am bound to this institution ; and my obligations to promote the interests of those who, like yourselves, are connected with it. The retrospect of years which are past, and the anticipation of years which are to come, conspire to make me feel, that while I am a brother, addressing brothers in literature and friendship, I have other bonds to be a faithful counsellor to the younger members of these Societies. Here, more than thirty years ago, I received an important part of my youthful training. I have never been able to recur to the employments which then occupied me—to the friendships which I formed—and the literary and social privileges which I enjoyed, without deep emotion. The remembrance of them has been the companion of my wanderings—the cause of excitement in a thousand joyous interviews—a stimulus to exertion in that which was manly and honorable—an aid in the hour of struggle—and comfort in moments of despondency. I never return hither, without those times and employments being before me, as if they were the existences of the present, and not the almost forgotten dreams of the past.

Here, too, I caused to be educated those whom it is my natural duty to advise and protect. It was but twelve short months ago, at our last meeting, that those mingled with you, to listen to the counsels which the occasion might dictate, who constitute the all of manhood which I shall ever give to

the cause of literature and liberty, morals and human happiness.

For fifteen years too, it has been my official trust, as one of the guardians of this institution, to provide for the instruction of those who were committed to it; to watch over their morals and secure to them the lessons which should guide them in the paths of duty and usefulness. Approaching you under such circumstances, you will not expect me, nor shall I have either the power or the inclination, to trifle with matters of fancy or deal in flowers of rhetoric.

But what shall be my theme? Shall it be, the life of the educated man—the past, with its joys and its sorrows—the future with its solitudes, its hopes and its duties? The pleasures, the obligations, and the appropriate results of literary and scientific acquirements? The character, history, and principles of education which have distinguished this seminary, to the benefit of our country and the cause of christianity? These might be appropriate topics—but I have discussed them on former occasions.

Shall I then speak of the human mind; its powers and capacities for improvement—their feebleness here, and their steady progress, under proper culture, until they reach the separating line, if such there be, which divides them from higher and holier intelligences;—powers and capacities, which seem fitted to rise, by gradation after gradation, until they approach the archangel that inhabits near the throne of his Maker? The contemplation would be salutary to the heart and to the head. But, ten years ago, when your societies first united for this annual festival, your predecessors invited me to lead the way, in those addresses which were intended to be made profitable to you; and I then offered to them the suggestions which I supposed useful on this absorbing theme. A different train of reflection, but not unconnected with it, is now forced upon me. I desire to address, not my elder but my younger brothers; and to make to them a few suggestions upon a subject of abiding interest in their future career—the importance of the study of the Bible, in

forming the character of literary and scientific men, of scholars of every grade and every occupation—suggestions, which I hope, will not be inappropriate to the first literary exercise, in this edifice, which has been reared from its ashes, for the worship of the Author of that Book.

Be not surprised, nor dissatisfied, my young friends, with this annunciation of my subject. I do not propose a full and labored argument upon it. Such an argument is quite too broad for an occasional address. Nor shall I solicit your attention to the holy and sacred nature of that Book, to its character and features as developing the depravity of our nature, and the retributions which await us, nor as exhibiting that “mystery of mysteries” the great atoning self-sacrifice for human guilt; which constitute the beneficent purpose for which it was transmitted to us. You have elder brothers, here and elsewhere, whose commission it is to hold up these features before you; and who may safely touch and sustain the ark of the covenant. My object is, to urge you to study it, for other, though inferior considerations.

What are you? what is your situation? Students; scholars; with eminent advantages for acquiring beneficial knowledge—bound by imperative obligation to acquire it, and thus render yourselves respected and happy, and practically useful to your less favored fellow men. This obligation you acknowledge—this duty you feel. To doubt that you thus acknowledge and feel, would be an insult to your understandings and a reproach to your hearts. May not the study of the Bible be made serviceable in enlarging the circle of your knowledge?—strengthening your powers?—giving you safe principles of action? and fitting you successfully to serve the society in which your lot may be cast? Let us endeavor to find an answer to these questions.

What is the Bible? It purports to be a communication from the all-knowing and eternal Mind of the universe. A record of our race—of our creation—powers—capacities and destiny. Its claims, in these respects, demand for it an earnest attention. Its origin, preservation and existence, at

the present moment, is a standing, perpetual miracle. A great part of it was written more than three thousand two hundred years ago : and all of it, has been of nearly eighteen hundred years duration. For centuries the art of printing gave no aid in multiplying copies and preserving it. Yet from the time when its first pages were written, it has been handed down, from age to age, protected in its integrity and purity—undefaced, unmutilated and almost unaltered. And where are the writings of the nations, cotemporaneous with its origin ? of Assyria, and Chaldea, and Egypt ? of all those which preceded Greece and Rome ? They perished with their authors, or were lost in the wasting of their nations. Where are the writings of Greece ? A part, and a part only remain. Of the four hundred works of Aristotle, one of the great masters of human reasoning, and the merits of which would create a desire to save them, but about forty have reached us, and even of these, some are broken, and of others the genuineness is questioned. Not one-hundredth—perhaps not one-thousandth part, of the precious literature of that land of poetry, eloquence and philosophy, has escaped the wreck of her liberty and national existence. Rome was the successor—the imitator—the competitor—the survivor of Greece in literature ; yet few of her works, which were her pride and her glory, survive. She was, for a long period, the keeper of the Book of the Cross, as she was of the literary productions of her citizens. Yet it remains and they have perished. The dramas of Livius Andronicus were the first regular compositions in Latin, of which we have any record. Where are they ? Where are the works of Ennius, Naevius, Pacuvius and others ? We retain a line of one of them—*Laetus sum, laudari abs te, pater, laudato viro* : of others there is little of any substantial value. Where are the works of Cato, except his *de re Rustica* ? Of Varro ? Of all those, to whom *Cicero* in *de Claris Oratoribus*, refers ? Of some even of his own more perfect productions ? Where are the works on natural philosophy and the sister sciences, mathematics and geometry, which have been called the implements

of natural philosophy? They were in existence when the *Origines* of Cato were written, yet now *Quae reliquiae? quodve vestigium?*

Why the difference as to this book? For many hundred years, copies were not multiplied and scattered, so that the ordinary causes of decay and destruction could not reach them. Yet the flames which have consumed palaces and cottages and libraries have left it unharmed. The eruptions of the volcano have not buried, and the more terrible devastations, of the barbarian have not destroyed it. The siege, and sacking, and utter desolation of the capital, and the scattering to the utmost ends of the earth, of the nation to whom it was committed, defaced not one of its features. The temple was destroyed, but the laws written upon its tables, were not abrogated nor erased. The *Cross* is the essence and the emblem of the record; and while all around the place where it was erected, utterly perished, that record, in all its perfectness, was protected. Whether it be true or not, that *ΤΟΥΤΩ ΝΙΚΑ* was written, over that ensign, in letters of fire upon the heavens, and conducted the first Christian Emperor to victory, it is true that the doctrines of this book were planted by the throne, and extended wide as the empire, of the Cæsars; and yet when that empire fell and expired beneath the scourge of the northern hordes and the scimitar of the Mohammedan, this book with its text and its doctrines continued to live; its energies were renewed, and it is still the same as when Constantine became its advocate. It has passed through times of literary and moral darkness as well as light—of barbarism as well as civilization—through periods of enmity, as well as friendship, to its contents—and crossed that oblivious gulf which divides the modern from the ancient literary world, and where lies covered up, forever, so much of the literature and science of the nations. Other books have perished when there was no hostility to their doctrines; this has survived when the arm of power was stretched out, and every human passion exerted for its destruction.

It has survived too, with no essential alterations, and requiring, comparatively, few learned emendations of its text. Take into your estimate the magnitude of the work, and the multitude of the copies which curiosity and piety, through so long a period, have made, and the changes in its words and expressions will be found so few as to create astonishment. It has been translated into the languages of all nations who have professed its religious faith—been subjected to *Interpolating Commentaries—Talmuds and Paraphrases—Masoretic Punctuations—Critical Collections—Dissertations—Compilations*—by the primitive Fathers—half pagan Christians—Catholics and sectarian Protestants—and yet its text has been rescued from them all. Its *variae lectiones* are less numerous than those of any other ancient work, which has been subjected to any thing like equal exposure. It has called for commentaries upon its meaning, and they may be piled volume upon volume, before human wisdom shall have searched out all its stores of knowledge. Filled, as it is, with modes of speech belonging to Asiatic languages; with allusions to arts which are lost; to nations which are extinct; to customs gone by; and treating of counsels which are not yet fully developed: humble piety united to all learning may continue to expend their force upon it; but *what was written, remains written still*; and *so written*, that *all may read and understand* it. You know that Egypt was learned and scientific. She was so, while Greece was yet barbarian, and Rome was without a name. But the denunciation was uttered against her—the Assyrian—the Persian—the Greek—the Roman—the Arabian—the Turk—came. Nation after nation has trodden her down, and we grope among her pyramids and her ruins for expositions of her knowledge and her religion. Her history, and literature, and science, doubtless had their written evidences and records; yet what remains except that which is contained in the hieroglyphics upon her monuments and in her temples—and who can read and explain them? Who shall give us assurance that we shall ever be able fully to comprehend the knowledge which

they contain and were intended to convey? They will probably never be read, so that all, even of the learned, shall agree in their language, much less in their meaning.

This is true not only in regard to ancient writings, but to many which are not old. Shakspeare is not alone in this predicament. It is not yet two centuries and a half, since *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Richard the second* and *third*, (his first plays of whose date we have certain knowledge) were written, and yet, Warburton and Farmer, Hanmer and Rowe, Pope and Theobald, Upton and Grey, Stevens, and—more than all the rest—Johnson, have devoted years of labor to restore his text, and tell us what he did write. Why has it required comparatively so little labor to restore and preserve the purity of this volume, which is so much older and has encountered so much greater trials? Why was it that the Jews to whom “the law and the prophets” were first committed, should have manifested such diligence, when it was transcribed or copied, that they even counted the number of letters and compared and recorded them? Why has it come down, through centuries, when all else has been subject to alteration and change and destruction? The only answer, which even infidelity can reasonably give, is to be found in the writing itself, and in the guardianship of its own all-powerful Author, who has protected it by his providence, and shielded it, by the terrible denunciation with which it closes, against him who shall add to, or take away from “the words of the prophecy”—“God shall take away his part out of the book of life.”

Have you no desire to become thoroughly conversant with so remarkable a work? To learn by a study of its contents, why it should have been thus protected and preserved? If some literary relic of an ancient genius were dug up from the ruins of *Herculaneum* or *Pompeii*, your curiosity would be excited, and you would labor at its pages with assiduity and zeal. Here is a Book older and better preserved than any which the lava of *Vesuvius* or *Etna* ever entombed, and containing more and better learning than all the literature and

philosophy of the ancient world combined. Will you not read, examine and study it?

Its writing and contents are worthy of its origin and history. The first part of it was written in Hebrew, the second in Greek, unless we except the book of Matthew, which was possibly written in Hebrew, and translated into Greek by himself or some other under his inspection. These languages were familiar to those who wrote, and those by whom it was to be first used. Its various portions are from the pens of about thirty individuals, living at different times, through a space of fourteen hundred years, and thus separated, in age, from each other. Yet the similarity of their language, style and idioms exhibits a literary phenomenon. The same similarity on these points, does not exist, in the same number of writers, in any language, age, or country, varying only according to the subject matter which is treated. Test this assertion for yourselves, by comparing the passages which have reference to the same subjects, or require the same mode of writing. You will find the narrative of facts—the declaration of moral principles and rules of action—the exhibition of incidents which portray the feelings and excite sensibility—the developments of religious faith and practice—the annunciations of the character, providence and government of God, from one end of that vast volume to the other, as if the same individual had spoken and written them. There are no such incongruities as the Koran contains, where the sublimest ideas and expressions are mingled with the lowest and most vulgar; sometimes, as the sceptical *Gibbon* remarks, crawling in the dust, and at other times, lost in the clouds. The Bible is, throughout, a consistent whole, in style and substance. From the simple, unadorned, yet sublime account of the creation “in the beginning,” to the Revelation at Patmos, of that which shall be, we seem to find the same pen, the same intellect, the same heart. Was this accident? Why did not the accident occur with other men, and in other lands? The writers differed as widely as possible in station, employment and human learning: the favored foundling of the princess of

Egypt—the old man of Uz—the poet of Israel—Solomon on his throne of glory—the seers of Judah and Jerusalem—the fishermen of Galilee—the pupil of Gamaliel—the disciple who lay on the neck of Jesus—why did all these think and write so much alike? Do you not believe that you would be abundantly rewarded for the labor, which would enable you to answer this inquiry?

This labor will teach you another fact which may be useful to you. The writings of these men have been translated into your own language, by those who were familiar with the original tongues, and in the daily habit of using that portion of ours, which is derived from others, yet they cautiously avoid words, phrases, and idioms, which were drawn from the peculiarities of other languages; and their translation is a purer specimen of English or Anglo-Saxon, than any other book, written in their own day, or at any subsequent time. The copy which you now use has been approved, as the most accurate, by men of learning, of all sects and denominations, for two hundred and twenty-six years. It was made under judicious orders of the British monarch, James the first, in 1607, by forty-seven able and learned scholars of Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge. They felt the absolutely sacred nature of the office conferred upon them, and neither “coveting the praise of expedition, nor fearing the reproach of slackness,” gave us a faithful translation of the original, true to its spirit, and *a standard* of the purity and excellence of our own language. Numberless passages might be quoted to prove this assertion. I refer you to a single one. The Lord’s prayer contains but three or four words which can be traced to any other than an Anglo-Saxon origin.

The Bible is, in this respect, a literary curiosity, and a fit study, for you, as American scholars, who must use that language, to communicate to your fellow men, the knowledge which you may acquire. Every scholar should desire to understand and write his own language with purity and force. The tongue of every nation has its peculiarities, and is moreover suited to their general character, and to the

current of ideas and modes of thought among the people. You may study the character of nations in the languages which they speak. It was so, in old time, with the Hebrew, the Greek and the Latin; and it is so now, with the Italian and French, the Spanish and English. And those have written and spoken, with most power to their countrymen, who have written and spoken their own language with most purity and propriety. This is a truth which you ought not to overlook in your aspirations for distinction, and your desire for usefulness. Our Anglo-Saxon is plain, strong, beautifully simple, and admirably suited to the true character of the race, of which you form a part; and the more purely you speak and write it, the more efficient will you become as writers and speakers. Examples living and dead, support this remark. Swift, Hall, Marshall and Madison, will be read and admired, when the lengthened exotics, of many others shall have found their appropriate position, as evidences of false taste and want of judgment. And if I may be permitted, without offence to any, to suggest a comparison between living scholars and orators, take Webster, distinguished among the senators of his own country; and Brougham, the first in genius and capacity in the British house of Lords. They are equals, perhaps, in the higher qualities of intellect, yet every sound scholar will give preference to the former, in the style and power with which his argument is exhibited. The difference, to a great extent, arises from the difference of their language. Webster is one of the purest Anglo-Saxon speakers with whom I am acquainted. His ideas are clear as light, to those whom he addresses, because they are presented with simplicity of words and phrases, and without the superfluous drapery which is borrowed from other languages. If you regard your own reputation as speakers, I cannot urge too strongly upon you, an early and diligent devotion to this characteristic of style. My own errors lead me to become your counsellor on this point. But do not misunderstand me, and misconstrue my meaning in relation to it. I mean not to condemn the diligent study of the

ancient languages, from which so many additions have been made to ours, nor the use of many words whose etymology runs back to them. I am not yet relieved from my prejudices in their favor, nor so very wise as to regard their study as waste of time. Your reading of the classical languages and writers ought to be thorough, both for the discipline of your judgment, taste and style, and for a correct understanding, not only of what is derived from them, but of the very structure and use of all language.

The study of the Bible is an efficient means of acquiring correct language and style; not studying it, to borrow its phrases, and profusely quote, on all occasions, its inimitable passages—a practice which savors little of good taste or reverential feeling—but studying it, to become imbued with its simplicity and force and elevation. Its unaffected narrative—unadorned pathos—pointed invective—picturesque and graphic description—plain yet magnificent energy, cannot be thoroughly comprehended without appropriate effects upon your taste and judgment. Observe, for example, the preachers of the gospel. The manner in which its allurements are depicted—its admonitions uttered, and its threatenings denounced by them, will indicate to you the source from which they have derived their reasonings and illustrations—whether directly from the fountain of living truth, or the stagnant pools of human commentaries. They who have aided their style and modes of thought by diligent study of this work, if they do not rise to the first grade of excellence, never sink to inferiority. Observe, again, two comparatively unlettered men; laborious in their employments and altogether without the adornments of literature. If one diligently reads the Bible, and becomes familiar with its language and expressions, and the other never opens it, you may tell the fact, by the superiority of the former, in his ordinary manner of conversation, even upon topics unconnected with the doctrines of the Book. The same fact is illustrated by two schools, in one of which it is sedulously taught, and in the other, is never read. You cannot converse with the scholars, without remarking the contrast.

There is cause, I think, to rebuke those who have written and lectured on style and composition, that among the authors and books recommended, the Bible is so seldom pressed upon the consideration of the student. There is no one superior to it, in examples suited to correct and discipline the taste. There are no works of human genius containing finer passages. Search the volumes of fiction, of poetry and eloquence, and produce the passages most justly admired, and their equals and superiors may be readily found in this work. Herodotus and Xenophon do not surpass it, in the simplicity and beauty of their narrative, nor Homer in the splendor and sublimity of his descriptions. Compare, for yourselves, the unornamented yet intensely sublime account which is given of the creation of the world and of man, in the commencement of the volume, with any and all the efforts of pagan or Christian writers. Compare the noblest pages in Homer, those in which he portrays the majesty and government of Jupiter, and his interference in the conflict of contending armies, with the annunciation of the attributes of the Christian's God, by Job, Isaiah and their fellow penmen, and with the manifestations of his power, at every step, as he led the Israelites from bondage to dominion. Compare the clouds and thunder and scales of Olympus, with the awful exhibition at Sinai, and the destruction of the enemies of his chosen people not only in their journeyings but at subsequent periods of their history. Make your comparison as extensive as you please, upon any and every subject embraced in it, and apply the most rigid rules of criticism, and you will come to the conclusion, that in correctness, energy, eloquence and dignity of composition, it is without a rival. Why, then, shall it be disregarded by the scholar who is ambitious of excellence in writing and speaking?

You know that a notion has often prevailed, that it ought to be translated anew, and adapted to what is called modern refinement in style. I can perceive no great wisdom in this opinion. The experiments heretofore made have given little encouragement to renew the effort, and I trust none of you

will be found aiding in its renewal. It results very much from overweening vanity in its authors, who have not yet proved that they are competent to correct the errors of the learned men, who gave it to us, as it is. And even if it were more defective, I would not subject it to the hazard of correction. It is venerable for its age, beautiful in its simplicity, and masculine in its energy. And what is more than all this, British and American Christians—a very large and evangelizing part of the Christian world—have for centuries thought by its language, worshipped and communed with their Maker and their Saviour in its words and phraseology. It is profanation to disrobe it of its sanctity, and cruelty to deprive them of their accustomed medium of holy intercourse.

The style of the Scriptures is admirable, and you have it, in a language worthy of all acceptance; a language, in which the great truths of the only true religion have been exhibited with a power as strong, and an eloquence as fervid, as in any other. And that language commends itself to your affections as the only one under heaven, in which legalized civil liberty has ever spoken among the children of men. Religion combined with liberty, founded upon and protected by written law, has, thus far, used it and it alone; and in the progress of human events, it does seem destined to carry them forward to the perfect emancipation of the human race; when praise from the islands shall mingle with the anthems of the continents, and when mountain shall answer unto mountain, and echo back the rejoicings of freedom in the plains.

But it is not alone for these reasons that I urge this study upon you. It will greatly enlarge your knowledge and guide you to the acquisition of that which is useful. No human work contains so much which it is important to know. There is a fund of real information in it which no man can estimate, who has not carefully examined it, page by page, compared it with what he has learned from other sources, and tried it by the established principles of science and evidence. You must not, however, expect to find in it, details of philosophy,

and dissertations on the sciences. It was written with no such purpose. It does not deal in speculations and theories, nor in scientific demonstrations, but in facts, principles and doctrines; and the combination of these forms its system. They relate to, are connected with, and serve to establish and illustrate, Geology, Astronomy, Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Geography, History, and Chronology; subjects of necessary and indispensable learning to the scholar: and you may rely without hesitation, on their accuracy and truth. Infidelity and hostile religions have tried their powers in vain, to detect untruths, misrepresentations and mistakes. Their assaults have been most successfully repelled. The sneers of some, and the arguments of others, as to the age of the world, and the deluge; and the malignant wit and ridicule of Shaftsbury and Voltaire and Paine, against its facts and doctrines, have been triumphantly refuted by the very developments of science itself; the refutation is becoming, hour by hour, more complete and overwhelming: and if its language and contents be fairly dealt with, its character will not be disturbed, by any investigations of avowed enemies or doubting friends.

Many of the assaults which have been made upon it, especially those of recent date, profess to find countenance in Geology;—and want of caution in Christian Philosophers has given them currency. Discoveries in that science are supposed to have established facts inconsistent with the Mosaic account of the creation and the deluge. You will, to a greater or less extent, pursue the study of Geology here, and as you are engaged in the business of life. It is assuming a character of intense interest, in all the concerns of society, and will greatly promote the comfort and prosperity of mankind; but do not pervert it to their injury, by making it an instrument to unsettle a faith, more important to liberty and happiness, than all the acquisitions which science can ever make. Properly investigated it furnishes satisfactory evidence that the Christian's God made the earth as he spread out the heavens. It ought to lead you, step by step, to him, and to the acknowledgment of his creating energy. The earth is a great laboratory, where not only a creating but a sustaining

power, and a skill equal to that power, have impressed and continue the immutable laws of matter. It furnishes to my mind an answer more potent than miracles, to the atheist's crime and the sceptic's folly. Its teeming wonders; its surface of mountain and of vale; its oceans with their mighty depths, designed for the sustenance of animated nature; the formation of its minerals; the fires of the volcano; the thousand chemical combinations which act upon its fluid as well as solid portions, and all fitted to accomplish and carry forward the purposes of its formation, cannot be studied without enlarging your capacity for usefulness, and giving you a better apprehension of his attributes who made them all. But let not your investigations become weapons to impugn the only account which has given you any light in regard to their creation. Be not wise beyond that which is written. The words of God, are a living and faithful commentary upon his works, to illustrate their meaning and enforce their truth. And the conscientious Christian should feel no dread of this or any other science, nor any wish to arrest its progress. Investigation, directed to the earth, the air, the ocean or the heavens, can reveal no facts calculated to unsettle his faith.

The argument which has been drawn from Geology amounts to this and nothing more. There are formations of earths, rocks and minerals, which by the ordinary process of addition, concretion and crystalization could not have been brought to their present state, within the period fixed by Moses for the creation, and therefore his account must be untrue. But is it not obvious that this argument is destitute of force, unless they can establish three positions—that the writer of Genesis declares *WHEN* the *matter* of the earth was formed—that the creation spoken of consisted solely of the formation of matter and of the principles which were to bring it into its present state—and that these principles have had one uniform action, as to time and place, from the beginning to the present hour, forever the same and forever acting with the same rapidity. Yet no one of these positions can they support by any light which genius or science has yet afforded. The Bible neither affirms nor denies them. Its object was, not so

much, to give the history of matter, as of mind. Not so much to tell us *when*, as *why* the world was formed—to show its preparation and fitness for the temporary and probationary residence of undying spirits, and display, before us and all intelligences, the divine wisdom, power and beneficence. Hence we are only informed, that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth;” but we are not told when that beginning was, nor how long the earth was without form and void, darkness upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters. When man was to be formed, he divided the light from the darkness—made the firmament—separated the dry land from the gathering together of the waters—commanded the earth to bring forth—fixed the lights of the sun and moon and stars to rule over the day and the night—filled the water and the land with animate and inanimate things, and then placed man upon it. But in what condition was it then? Will the unbeliever tell us? Was it the same *rudis indigestaque moles*, as in the beginning? Chaos and darkness had given place to order and light. Was the soil to be formed, through a process of years? The herbage was already ripe for the sustenance of the full grown animals which passed before Adam to receive their names, and the trees and flowers and fruits of the garden were ready for his enjoyment. And was the interior structure left unorganized? Were there no ores in the mountains—no minerals to minister to human wants? How did the descendants of Cain so speedily learn to handle the harp and the organ and become artificers in brass and iron? Or were a part of these formed, and will they tell us which part it was, and which have been the result of the laws of nature since? And if they cannot, shall their theories unsettle our faith? We cannot justify to our own reason, a disbelief in the written record, until we are capable of demonstrating its falsehood. It should not be theorized away. God made “the *earth* AND the *world*.” The finishing of creation left *all* things, like man, perfect in their kind; and it left, too, the principles of its existence, impressed on every

atom of matter to sustain and preserve it, and to form it anew, when 'it should become necessary to carry on the purposes of its maker. He pronounced it all "*very good*"—adorned it with loveliness and hung it up, in its rich garniture, among the orbs which were to proclaim "Glory to God in the highest."

Do not, I entreat, read this book, to scorn or to doubt. True science will come to the aid of your belief. Humboldt, Werner, and others, and especially Cuvier in his theory of the earth, by an investigation of facts, and a sagacious induction from the known changes of the earth, the traditions of nations and the astronomical observations of the Chaldeans, Egyptians and Hindoos, have established the Mosaic account with a demonstration which leaves no ground of argument to the adversary. And the balance is sustained, even by the principles of legal evidence by which courts of justice decide upon our civil rights. Reason has been able to place the singular events by which the Almighty spoke, and the miracles which overpowered incredulity, on the ground of historical evidence. Philosophy yields to the examination, and Faith receives them with holy reverence. Scepticism is disarmed of rational support. It has always been founded in ignorance or guilt. It has adjudged and condemned that which it never studied and comprehended. It seems to have forgotten, that truth must be learned by evidence; that evidence demands reflection and study; and that sober investigation, with honest purpose, is necessary to acquire and learn every thing which is valuable; yet without these it has theorized on the profoundest truths, and ended in doubt or confirmed unbelief. Voltaire, Hume, Paine, and the whole host, have committed errors in point of fact and sound reasoning, which would disgrace you at this early period of your scholarship. Scepticism has always been impatient of study. It never investigated facts and fundamental principles, and was never willing to understand the alphabet of the subject, on which it ventured its opposition. And hence its refutation has been com-

plete. And why should it not? Did God produce an imperfect work? Would not omniscience make the true principles of science, applicable to the workmanship of his own hands, consistent with and vindicators of that workmanship? He has done so. And all his words stand unshaken as the hills which rest upon his power.

Nay more, His book furnishes tests, by which the truth of ancient writers may be tried, and they are to be credited or disbelieved, as they approach or recede from the narrations of this volume. You may try Herodotus, Thucydides, Josephus, or any other, by this standard, in what relates to the same principles and the same events. It narrates and refers to a large proportion of the events of human societies, not only preceding and contemporaneous, but long subsequent to the times in which the writers lived. Its traditionary and inspired notices of the earliest condition and actions of mankind are the only record from which you can acquire a knowledge of them. In this respect it is an indispensable and invaluable work. You can find no substitute for it. Its subsequent details are more simple and sure than those of any and all other works united, and they are confirmed by the monuments of history, and by all that remains of the nations which they mention. You will find abundant illustrations of this in Shuckford, Prideaux, Adam Clarke's commentary, and other works which relate to the subject. Of their faithfulness and truth there are evidences in the traditions of many people—the remains of kingdoms and nations—and in every line of the recorded history of our race. There is a recent and beautiful confirmation of one short passage, which has heretofore stood unsustained, so far as I know, by any collateral testimony. In the 14th chapter of 1 Kings, we are told that in the fifth year of the reign of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the Lord's house and of the king's house, and all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. This was a thousand years before the final sacking of that city and the disper-

sion of its inhabitants. Of this invasion and plunder, there is no mention in profane history; but now, twenty-eight hundred years after the event, it is said to be verified by satisfactory proof. Champollion, in searching among the ruins of Thebes, the seat of Shishak's power, found sculptured upon the walls of one of those magnificent temples built by him and dedicated to his gods, a triumphal ceremony, which represents him, as dragging the chiefs of thirty conquered nations to the feet of the idols whom he worshipped, and among them Jauhada Malek, king of Judah. The inscriptions upon the *shield* which he bears, show the land from which it came, and the portrait of the monarch, presents the same Jewish countenance, which, by a miracle running through forty centuries, has been preserved to the present hour. Time—the investigations of science—the changes of nations—are but instruments in the hands of the Author of that Book to vindicate its truth.

Its prophecies are an important portion of the history, not only of Israel, but of the world. You will not study them, at this period of your lives, to find out that which is yet to come. Such a study, would demand subjugation of the passions, calmness and humility, enlarged knowledge and sound judgment, unsuited to your years. But that which relates to the past will afford you most useful information, and teach you powerful and abiding lessons. When they were delivered, they were anticipation and prediction of things improbable and incredible, but long since become facts. To you they are recorded history. Not one of them has failed. Their execution is now written on the face of the fairest part of the earth, in letters of desolation. None can see them and disbelieve. Are not the guilty cities of the plain, still covered by the bitter waters of Asphaltites! Is not Canaan still a curse and Babylon a desolation, where the Arab does not pitch his tent, nor the shepherd make his fold? Is not Ismael still the terror of the mountain and the danger of the valley? Is there any more a prince in the land of

Egypt? And are not the separate and contrasted destinies of Esau and Israel, demonstration to every mind, that the spirit which foresaw and foretold both, was not of man? Esau possessed the very fatness of the land; his people were numerous; his power great; his cities strong; his pride haughty; yet in the midst of his glory, and when to human eye his strength was firm and his growth vigorous, the denunciation went forth from the mouth of the prophet. He had sinned, and “shed the blood of Israel with the sword, in the time of their calamity and in a time when their iniquity had an end,” and now, utter desolation covers his land and Esau is no more—a blasted monument of the precise truth of the prediction. The sword of the Almighty was bathed in heaven and came down upon Idumea and upon the people of his curse to judgment. The bow was bended and the arrows were not spared. The barrenness of El Ghor extends from the Elanitic Gulf to the Dead Sea. The Edom of the Edomites, is without an inhabitant. From generation to generation it has lain waste. Her nobles were called to the kingdom and none were there; all her princes have been nothing, and there is not any remaining of the house of Esau. A young countryman of your own, who has recently followed the track of the Israelites, and traversed Idumea, was deeply impressed with the fulfilment of this prophecy, and its evidence of the truth of this volume. “I would,” he exclaims, “that the sceptic could stand as I did among the ruins of this city—among the rocks, and there open the sacred Book, and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities of the world. I see the scoff arrested—his cheek pale—his lip quivering—his heart quaking with fear, as the ruined city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as that of one risen from the dead. Though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the hand writing of God himself in the desolation and eternal ruin around him.”

How extraordinary has been the contrast with Israel. He

too had sinned, and punishment was denounced against him ; but that punishment was coupled, not with his extinction but his preservation and eventual restoration to happiness and power. The promise was to Abraham and his seed, and that promise has been kept and will be kept. His descendants have been chastised but not consumed—dispersed among all the nations under heaven—yet, in every land, preserved a separate and distinct people. For nearly three thousand years of their history, they have been in bondage and dispersion, yet have preserved their religion, their language, their habits, and their customs—unmingled with others. They have been compared to the waters of the Rhone, which flow through without mixing with the waves of the intervening lake, until they discharge themselves in the ocean. Seven millions of them yet remain in the four quarters of the globe, trodden down by the gentiles, but awaiting their restoration ; and they will be trodden down, until the time of the gentiles be fulfilled ; but as surely as Esau is extinct, Israel will be restored. The words of the prophecy will stand sure. They will yet awake from their slumbers and believe. An avenging God will then become a restoring Saviour, to a guilty but repentant people. They will be gathered. The glory which departed, when the tragedy on Calvary was enacted, will come again. Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The house of Aaron will again minister in her temple. The dark tresses of the daughters of Zion, which have hung mournfully in exile, will be wreathed again in beauty, and anthems and homage ascend from Moriah to the Great Deliverer.

But it is not my purpose, to-day, to urge, before you, the evidences and proofs, from prophecy and history, of the truth of the volume which I recommend for your study. But I bid you fear not to examine the mass of facts, the concatenation of stupendous and minute events which it contains ; remembering as I have before warned you, that its object was not to furnish systems of philosophy and science. Its design was to give a true and genuine account of the origin of our

globe, and its inhabitants; of the source from which they sprung, and the principles of that superintending providence, which controls their progress and fixes their irreversible destination. In this respect it is an original work, having nothing which resembles it, in human learning. No pagan system or writing ever suggested the idea of instructing men in these momentous truths; of teaching them that they were created and governed by one who had universal dominion, and of embracing purity of morals as an essential part of a religious code. But this work begins and carries on the history of our race, in connexion with a religious system which does all this. And the story which it tells is compressed yet conspicuous—simple yet dignified—most general, yet minute. It gives a particular account of the peopling of the earth, the dispersion, settlement and divisions of the nations; and then, selecting one people which was to preserve the knowledge and worship of the Most High, gives its history, almost by the names of the individuals composing it and the common events in the actions of many of their lives; while at the same time, by prophecy it foreshadows the destiny of many other nations. Yet in doing all this, it keeps unbroken the unity of the whole. Such a unity exists in no emanation of human intellect. All its lengthened narration; its small and its great events; the secret actions of individuals, and the convulsions and revolutions of kingdoms, are made to have reference to one object—one catastrophe—to an incident foretold for centuries—looked for by a large part of the pagan world, without understanding it; an incident apparently unimportant in its nature, when considered separately,—the unjust sacrifice of a being in the form of man—yet mighty in the preparation for it and overwhelming in its consequences. Standing on a single point where this incident occurred, on a small hill in the territory of Judea, with this book as your telescope, you may look back through more than four thousand years, through the history of the family of mankind, and see with distinct vision, human actions and worldly events, pointing *forward* to, and influ-

enced by, the tragedy enacted on that spot ; and turning your eye to the future, you may behold the actions and events of near two thousand years which have since followed, bending *backward* to the same little point of time and space ; and you may follow on, until, perhaps, two thousand other years shall have completed the record of man's existence on earth, and it will still remain—and such it will be, through eternal ages, the central point of human hopes and human interests. Did unassisted human intellect form such a work ? Did Moses, upon the mountain nigh to Jordan, see that point of the promised land, and write his pentateuch in reference to it, without other aid than human thought and human skill ? Did he alone devise the sacrifices and ceremonies which prefigured that event ? And did David, Isaiah, and others, in strains which pagan and uninspired poetry has never equalled, foretell it because Moses had foreseen it ? Did the *sent One* come and suffer, that he might save them from the scorn of error and imposition ? Let the infidel and the scoffer answer. Be it yours, my young friends, to avoid their extreme folly ; to study, with all the energies of your intellects, the wondrous Book and gather up its stores of knowledge. “The prophecy came not of old time, by the will of man.”

It will require no hasty reading or thoughtless examination. All your powers of sober thought and diligent industry will be demanded for the task. But those powers will not be weakened nor the affections of your hearts debased by the exercise. It is a principle in the constitution of your nature that inaction of the heart and mind, renders both torpid and worthless ; while discipline, exertion, exercise on proper objects, will invigorate all their faculties and lead them on to the highest elevation of happiness and honor—the devotion of your capacities to the purposes for which they were created : an elevation which as favored scholars you cannot fail to desire. A rigorous investigation of the authenticity and principles of this book will discipline your powers—impart to you generous and lofty sentiments—high and controlling

sense of duty—force of character to meet responsibilities, and firmness to encounter trials. And what affection or feeling of the heart is there, which will not find employment in the study? Do you seek an explanation of the nature, or illustration of any pure feeling—of filial duty and affection—of conjugal or parental love—of sympathy and kindness—of strong enduring friendship—of attachment to country and her institutions—of any one emotion which is worthy of you as social and immortal beings—or of any corrupt and debasing practice which reason forbids you to indulge? It will be found there.

I may not detain you by quotations to illustrate this truth; but let me refer you to one or two examples. Your young hearts go out towards your country, and there is something dear to you in the words, "*my native land.*" Turn then to the exiles from Israel when they sat by the rivers of Babylon, and read the inimitable description. They remembered their country—recalled the songs of Zion—and said, "If I forget *thee*, Oh Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning." Your ardent natures riot in the first impulses of friendship, whose essence is sympathy. Turn then to the visit to Bethany; and while you read an illustration of power over the grave and its tenants, you will see an equal exhibition of sympathy and friendship. Remember who it was, and whence he came, who paid that visit. The heaven of heavens was his throne; eternity his dwelling-place. He sustained countless worlds by his power, and held the keys of death and hell in his hands; and yet he forgot not the claims of human affection. He went on an errand of mercy and friendship to the disconsolate and agonized whom he loved, but whose weakness could give no aid to him. And when he witnessed their suffering, and saw his friend the victim of the destroyer, he, even he, "Jesus wept," and cried "Come forth," and was obeyed. Well might the believing and unbelieving Jews exclaim—"Behold *how* he *loved* him." This illustration of combined omnipotence and sympathy, is little less sublime

than when the same omnipotence, by his command, "Let there be light"—scattered the darkness which covered the material world; or when he prayed "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," and pronounced—"It is finished;" thus closing the parallel between man's creation and man's redemption, How paltry by the side of such passages, is the oft-quoted exhibition of human vanity, *Quid times, Caesarem vehis*, and a thousand others to which you are so often referred. "*Jesus wept*"—"Lazarus come forth." You can find no such passages, in any other author."

I might readily exhibit before you a multitude of other examples of sentiment and style, but I must hasten to another aspect of my subject. Knowledge, and the capacity to communicate it in the most perfect manner, will avail little in establishing a desirable reputation as scholars, unless they are used to support those moral and social principles on which the happiness of yourselves and society depends. Knowledge, I admit, of every kind, even that of figures, is calculated to soften the mind, and tends to link man with his fellows, and of itself, therefore, ought to prevent the commission of crime. But, yet it is true, that it is not always beneficial, and that "high mental attainments are no adequate security against moral debasement." The Duke of Wharton; Wilmot, Earl of Rochester; Villers, Duke of Buckingham, and Mirabeau, were in their days distinguished by wit, and taste, and learning, and knowledge; and they were not less distinguished by extravagance, revelry, lawless passions and disregard of moral and social virtue. High attainments are tremendous engines for the working out of good or evil. If not directed by correct and safe principles, they are "terrible weapons of ill." The educated rogue or infidel is but the more dangerous man.

This truth is worthy of serious reflection at the present time. There is a tendency in the education of the age—it may almost be called its characteristic—to overlook the importance, the indispensable necessity of laying correct social and moral principles at the foundation of all instruction.

The object seems to be, to teach the scholar so that he may secure temporary success, and run, with the speed of the locomotive, the career of wealth and popular applause. The wonderful mechanical inventions of the day, and the entire revolutions which are taking place in the business and employments of society, seem to have bewildered the common sense of mankind, and we are in danger of becoming not a moral and social, but a selfish and mechanical race. I do not regret, but rejoice in this progress, because I hope it will be made to subserve the permanent interests and happiness of men. But I do not desire to see the discoveries of Fulton and Arkwright and other inventors, exclude that instruction which rests on doctrines which are the essence of all safe knowledge, and are not merely of temporal but eternal duration. That education is the first object, and that secured, we may make *them* subservient to our pleasures, our interests, and all the high purposes of our creation. If you do not thus pursue the education which you have now commenced; if you do not establish, for yourselves, principles founded in your nature and in the nature of the social state, and regulate your learning by them, you will be no blessings to your day and generation, but may become madmen, who will scatter firebrands, arrows and death, in seriousness and in sport; excite, as you pass along, the gaze of abhorrent wonder at your knowledge and acquirements, but bear the detestation of the wise and good, and leave behind you only melancholy monuments of the desolation you have wrought.

But where will you find, that you may study, those principles, which, as scholars you may advocate, and carry out, in the actions of your lives? Will you go to uninspired men, when you have in your hands the instructions of those who were taught by an infallible omniscience, those principles which are necessary for your guidance? Will you go to men, who, themselves, did not even understand, by whom they were created; by whom governed, and to whom they had to answer? To teachers of the ancient heathen world? To

men of modern times, more blind than those of old, because they are incapable of seeing, when clearer light surrounds them? They were and are, without exception, ignorant of the very basis of moral and social principle—the relation of the creature to the creator; without which the relation and duties of one creature to another can never be understood. And unless the principle be right, the action directed by it, will, generally, be wrong. You are not ignorant, how assuredly your conduct is regulated by your opinions.

But if you are inclined to seek such teachers, go, and ask the wisest among them. Inquire of Epicurus. He will tell you, among other benighted errors, and as his essential doctrine, that matter acts independently, and that there is no intelligent agent to create and to preserve in the wide universe of matter; and if you believe him, you will eat and drink to-day, with no higher aim, and to-morrow you will die; and thus will end your miserable career on earth, among the beings, whose best and noblest interests it is your duty to serve and to promote. If there be no intelligent power to create and to preserve, whence and how came that wondrous body of yours, and still more wondrous intellect? Were they of chance? Were the parts of your frame—the hand, the ear, the eye—its internal make and structure, all from accident, and that accident repeated through six thousand years, and in countless millions upon millions of instances? Were your mental faculties; your social propensities; your passions, whose active energy sets all your powers in motion, all of chance? Did chance create this beauteous earth, with all its open and hidden glories; impress on every atom of matter the eternal law of its existence and its action, and make and sustain the mighty worlds which fill all space and roll their endless round—“then indeed is Chance a God, and ye may worship him.” But no, you and all that creation contains, are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” by a fearful and wonderful Maker; and his laws, if you can discover them, you are bound to obey. It were wiser, with Sir Francis Bacon, to believe every fable in the Legend, the Talmud and the

Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind, whose glory the heavens declare, and whose voice is heard in every language under heaven. Epicurus cannot teach you.

If not satisfied with him go to the Academy where Plato taught, and ask him for instruction. He will, perhaps, hand you his Republic, which, like the Utopia of More, you will soon discover, is the mere delirium of philosophy, utterly vain for the regulation of beings, with such interests and passions as you and your fellows possess. Or perchance, he may undertake to instruct you in his one of the three hundred Grecian notions of the *Chief Good*, and will tell you that it consists in being like God. You ask him, what is being like God? He will answer, that it consists in a good habit of genius. And when you inquire, how shall we attain a good habit of genius? with all his wisdom and knowledge he can only say, It is to be attained by Music, Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Geometry. And thus will end your inquiries at this oracle of paganism. He borrowed, it is true, something from Moses; for in his day the Jewish teachers mingled the doctrines of Grecian philosophy with their purer religious faith; and Grecian philosophers obtained some glimmerings of light from the law and the prophets: but he still remained ignorant of the only sure foundation on which a system of sound principles can rest.

Will you go to other Grecian and Roman instructors? Will you listen to Socrates, while he tells you that knowledge is the Chief Good which you ought to seek, but that you may practice idolatry, profaneness, impurity? Or Seneca,—that he does not know what duty is, and that you may destroy your own lives, to gratify your passions, or save mistaken honor? Or Cicero,—while he admits that he is much less capable of telling what he did, than what he did not think; recommends revenge as a duty, and honor as the only reward of virtue, and proposes to deify for worship his own daughter? Or will you adopt the humiliating doctrines of Pythagoras, and believe in the metempsychosis, and that this anxious, restless, and aspiring spirit which is within you, at the hour

of your dissolution, passes, not to a disembodied and joyous or agonized existence, but becomes the tenant of some bird, or beast, or reptile? This was, perhaps no unnatural faith, to those who have not a futurity revealed to them. It prevailed widely in the ancient world, and is at this moment, the settled belief of hundreds of millions in Eastern Asia. And why should it not be, when they have no avenue to the future opened before them? Do not you, and did not they, feel, that this life cannot be man's only abiding place? that this spirit cannot pass, upon the hasty and uncertain waves of time to an eternal nothingness? That the restless, irrepressible, and unsatisfied leapings of the heart and the affections, after that which is higher and beyond all that surrounds us, demand that we should credit something which belongs not to the passing hour? That "all the economy of nature; the beauty of the earth; the brilliancy of the stars; the glory of the lights of the day and the night; the forms of human strength and loveliness, cannot be taken from us and pass forever from our sight and our enjoyment? That there must be a continued—a prolonged existence; where the eye shall see, the ear hear, beauty fade not, the affections of the heart be not blasted, and the glorious 'panoply of nature be spread out, forever?' And how, without a revelation could man be assured of these things? He was not. And in his gropings after the future, he adopted the belief, that this spirit did not die with his decaying body, but survived in an humbler and more degraded form. But can you submit to be taught by such teachers, while the volume before you offers the full splendors of an undying existence, which marches onward and onward, in the fruition of growing powers, and multiplying pleasures?

Will you then desert the ancient pagan teachers, and wander to Confucius? He will give you maxims of prudence and social regulations, but sanctioned only by convenience and necessity, and leaving you and all whom he instructs in degraded idolatry and atheism. The Chinese empire has adopted his creed; and it is a mixture of deism, or

what is falsely called natural religion, and the humiliating doctrine of the transmigration of souls. "The attributes of their faith are obscenity and blood." (Buchanan.) Will you search the Institutes of Menu? Their translator, Sir William Jones, declares, that, with all their beauties, they have established only a system of despotism and priestcraft.

Mohammed will give you a mixture of Judaism, Christianity and Paganism. He had Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles to enlighten him; and to them is he indebted for every excellence which the Koran contains. All beyond the larceny which he committed upon them is the very fable and foolery of imposture; a cheat which the sword alone could have made prevalent. That sword, in a few short years, subdued to itself an empire wider than that of Rome, in her proudest hour, but in the degradation of his proselytes you witness the issue of his impostures.

If, despairing of success, among pagan and half enlightened instructors, you turn to Christian teachers, you do well. The students of this College, who have preceded you, were directed to the principles which they ought to adopt, and by which their conduct should be regulated, by the profound and eloquent lectures of Witherspoon and Smith; and you are required to study the dissertations of Paley. They were safe guides, for they sat at the feet of the great teacher, and learned their philosophy from him. But why will you rely upon them, when every thing which they taught and which was not error, they derived directly from the book which is in your own hands, and no commentary can equal the shining light of the original; *nunquam par sit, imitator auctori, —haec natura est rei, semper citra veritatem est similitudo.* They did not, they could not, nor can you, form a safe system of moral and social principles, as a guide for conduct; and no man without the aid of that book, has ever been able to form one. All the ancient philosophers failed and sunk into errors, and justified acts abhorrent to an enlightened conscience and sound judgment. And the infidel of modern times, is equally incompetent to the task; and adds to his folly, the deep

ingratitude of doubting, denying, scorning the teacher who gave him the lessons which he converts to weapons of offence. He raises the withered arm against him who healed it. Whence does he derive the lights of modern civilization; the morals, which enable him to escape from the debaucheries and errors and pollutions of pagan philosophy? From the teachings of this Book alone. But for it, he would now have been a worshipper of the sun, of wooden images, or of reptiles; and practising the abominations, which the wisest of ancient philosophers did practise. He partakes of the fruits of the promised land, but like the children of Anak in the valley of Eshcol, terrifies and drives far away those who seek to enjoy them.

Do you imagine that you are competent to the task of forming a code for yourselves, without the aid of this volume? Before you commit the vain folly of the experiment, enquire into the success of others—and take, for your example, the keenest intellect in the history of the human mind. Who shall he be? Aristotle? Who, and what was he? “He lived about three hundred and fifty years before Christ—studied for twenty years with Plato, one of the best of heathen teachers—was for seven years the instructor of Alexander—and Philip, out of gratitude for his services, rebuilt Stagira, his birth-place. After the age of fifty, he taught for twelve years in the ΑΥΓΑΙΟΝ on the banks of the Ilissus. Plato called him ‘the eye of the Academy’—Pope, the Columbus of the realms of wit—Cicero says, *Illud flumen orationis, aureum fundens Aristotelis*. For more than two thousand years, in some of the branches of human learning, he has not been excelled. Even yet, some of his works are regarded as almost infallible standards of criticism, rhetoric and poetry; and his ethics and politics have been preached and read, on the Sabbath, in the Churches of Germany.” He wrote on almost every branch of literature and science, and no teacher ever exhibited a more acute and powerful intellect. Some of his principles are sound practical wisdom. He taught that the dignity of human nature consisted in the proper exercise

of the moral and intellectual faculties—and its highest excellence in the constant habit of that exercise, guided by reason—and that our happiness depends chiefly on ourselves, and on the *wisdom* and *purity* with which we form and act upon our pursuits. He too gave us the maxim *ῥήλος μὲν Σωκράτης, ἀλλὰ φιλότατη ἡ ἀλήθεια*. With such a teacher even you might envy his scholars, the *Περιπατοῦντες*, if you had not the teacher who was not born in Stagira but¹ Bethlehem. Such, indeed, was his power in the investigations of science, that it has been almost profanely said, that he was “the forerunner of Jesus Christ, in the mysteries of nature, as John the Baptist was, in the mysteries of grace.” It is certainly true, that his works, and that of Euhemerus, historian of Messenia, who proved by monuments and records in the temples of the gods, in Greece and Arabia, that the generation of Olympus were but mortals deified by superstition—helped to prepare the way for the downfall of the sand-built structure of heathen mythology. He lived in the most enlightened and free country of antiquity; and was himself, the best scholar, the profoundest thinker, and the most acute investigator in that age and country. Yet there was a point, and it is that to which I am now soliciting your attention, on which he failed—and his failure ought to teach you a great moral lesson. When he attempted to philosophize on the existence and attributes of Deity, the nature of man and his destination, and the duties which result from these sources in our actions towards others; he became bewildered and ambiguous, left no certain guide to the enquirer after truth, nor any clear exposition of his own views. His account of the Deity was nothing more than this, *Ζῶον αἶδον ἄριστον—ἀσώματον—τὸ πρῶτον κινεῖν ἀκίνητον—ἀρχὴ λόγου—αἰτία καὶ ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων*. Excellent, eternal—incorporeal—mover and immoveable—principle of reason—cause and principle of all things. And in this blind description ended all his guesses. He needed a Revelation. He made indeed a great advance beyond the mythology of his time, but how infinitely did he fall below the conceptions of the God of the Bible, which are entertained by the humblest and most unlettered

Christian. Instead of exhibiting him as the Creator of all worlds, governing, guiding, and controlling all things, grand and minute, by a never ending and never resting providence—demanding adoration from all the works of his hands, and a strict accountability for every action, by all the intelligent creation—he joined nature with him as a part of his essence—and he himself sunk to the worship of the thousand Gods of Greece, the personifications of human passions, and interests :—

Gods, partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust.

Even his mighty intellect could not grasp the true conception, nor explain the multitude of personal and social duties which spring from it. And, my young friends, if Aristotle failed, can you hope to succeed? If Socrates and Plato admitted their need and hope of a revelation, will you spurn that which has been given to you? Is it not wiser to receive with humble confidence, the teachings which cannot err.*

The study of this Book is required here as a part of your collegiate course, and you will find in it instructions for all the duties which you owe to each other—to society—to your country—to mankind : maxims for conduct and manner, incomparably more pointed, prudent and safe than Seneca, Rochefoucault, Chesterfield, and a hundred other such men have given—or can give to you. There is no duty which you cannot find written there ; no condition or difficulty which it does not explain, and for which it does not furnish a solution. Its condensation and comprehensiveness place it in striking

* It ought, perhaps, to have been here suggested, that this Institution, was the *first*, (so far as I am informed,) into which the study of the Bible, as a college exercise, was introduced. A few years after I was graduated, I believe about the year 1813, the now aged and most venerable minister of the Gospel, the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, a few months after he became the President, adopted the plan of recitations on the Bible, on the Sabbath afternoon. They were, at first, confined to the senior class, the President himself presiding over the exercise, but were soon extended to the whole college. Dr. Hodge, professor in the Seminary at Princeton, Dr. Johns, of the Episcopal Church, with some others of high distinction, were then students here.

contrast with all other works. It would be pleasant to me to direct your attention to various passages as illustrations of the character of the instructions; but I am admonished that an allusion to a single one must close my address. I refer you to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, where in the space of about fifty short lines, there is a code of Law, more comprehensive, more just, more suited to the condition of all men, and better fitted to promote and secure their happiness than any other ever offered to them: a code which did not belong to the ritual or ceremonial law given to the Jews. That found its fulfilment in the sacrifice upon Calvary. This is of perpetual obligation, and rests upon us with all its original sanctions. You have read it again and again, and committed it to your memories, and heard commentaries upon its meaning. Have you examined and reflected upon it, to see how far it is perfect, when compared with the codes of other law-givers? of Numa, Solon, Lycurgus? Make the comparison. You will find theirs defective, weak, unfitted to secure the happiness and prosperity of those on whom they were to act; filled with evidence that their authors were men of like frailty with ourselves. With this you can find no such fault. You cannot alter it, add to it, or take away from it, without detracting from its value. And when you see it thus complete, ask yourselves, *when, where, by whom, and to whom* it was promulgated? About three thousand five hundred years ago, in the most desolate region of Arabia Petrea, six hundred thousand men "from twenty years old and upward able to go forth to war," besides women and children, amounting in all to probably much more than two millions of human beings of all ages and descriptions, were assembled around the foot of a mountain. If we regard them, as unconnected with a holy dispensation, they were fugitive slaves, from a land where for nearly two centuries they and their fathers had been doomed to a dreadful servitude, and to the ignorance and debasement which a cruel tyranny imposed. They were fleeing through a wilderness which then as now could afford no support for men or beasts: they were afflicted by hunger and thirst;

with nothing before them, but nakedness, enemies and death ; and they were ignorant, restless, impatient in disposition, without government or laws. What code could be adapted to such a people ? What authority sufficient to subject them to law, bind them to obedience, and guide them to virtue and happiness ? While there assembled, thunder and lightning and the sound of trumpets were upon the mountain, and the man who had assumed to be their leader pretended to receive this code of laws, immediately from the God whose terrors were before them, and delivered it to them, to bind and govern them and their descendants forever. And who was this leader who gave such a law, to such a multitude, under such circumstances ? A man, who for forty years of his life, had been bred up amidst the debaucheries of the Egyptian court. He was not ignorant, for he had been instructed in all the learning which gave fame to the schools of the Heliopolis of the Nile, and attracted to them Herodotus and Plato and other philosophers ; but that instruction was calculated to imbue him with a superstition, which descending from the adoration of the heavenly bodies, had sunk to the lowest degradation, the worship of the reptiles of the Nile. A man, who had slain an Egyptian and fled from the vengeance of the laws ;—a man who for forty years more, in exile from his country had tended the flocks of a shepherd of Midian,—and when his crime was forgotten had returned to persuade the slaves of his lineage to rebellion and desertion—rebellion against a power, the trophies of whose conquests had been borne from Northern Asia to the Indies and the Ganges—desertion, with a view to conquer and exterminate nations far more numerous, fierce and warlike than themselves, and take possession of a land of which they knew nothing but from rumor and tradition. It was indeed a land, which, if this book be true, had been promised to their great progenitor four hundred and thirty years before ; but this book was not then written to teach them that promise, and elevate their hopes of its fulfilment. Nor had that progenitor and his immediate descendants possessed and ruled over it ; but for pre-

cisely one-half of that long period, like the pastoral Bedouins of more recent times, had wandered over and pitched their tents in certain portions of it, and for the last half they and their fathers had dwelt in Goshen, until their leader tempted them to this most hopeless, desperate of all human enterprises. And this leader, too, had no peculiar powers or genius for persuasion, for he was "not eloquent," but "slow of speech and slow of tongue," and had to depend upon another to be his mouth-piece before Pharaoh. Such was the age of the world; such the multitude he led, and such the man who promulgated this law, if you deny that God was its author. Take its perfection, and all the attending circumstances, and no honest credulity can resist the conviction that a mightier than Moses spoke—a present, all-knowing all-governing God. It were wiser to adopt the follies of the atheist, and attribute all things to chance, than to deny this truth. It were as easy for such a man, to generate the matter of the universe and make a world, as to promulgate such a law, in such a mode, and bind not only such a people, but the whole civilized race of men for thousands of years.

Yet has all this been done. For forty years more, the last equal third part of that man's life, he led that multitude through troubles and wars, distresses and afflictions which have no parallel in the history of mankind, and at last on the borders of the land where they were to practise this law, surrendered their government to another leader. And in that land, while the sanctions of this law were regarded, the people were happy and glorious; when those sanctions were spurned, ruin and dispersion were their allotment.

This law is carried out in all its breadth and spirit, in the sacred Scriptures. It has descended from the wilderness of Arabia, through all the changes of times and nations; never for one moment deserting the land which it first governed, for portions of it are still read and taught by a wretched remnant amidst the ruins of the cities of Palestine; but it has passed from thence over oceans and continents; inhabited the cottage of the peasant, ascended the seats of power, and be-

come the foundation of the codes of all Christian nations. Since the hour of its promulgation, Israel has risen to the greatness of glory which Solomon possessed, and been dispersed in every land, a proverb and astonishment. Nations have flourished and fled away like the mists of the morning, and their names are lost. Imperial cities, and the monuments of the great have crumbled and been swept away with the hearth-stones of the humble; but Horeb still stands amidst the desolations of the wilderness, an evidence of the presence of the Author of this law; and this law has continued to roll on with undecaying power, in contempt of all the passions and philosophy and infidelity of men. Its principles are still found in accordance with our interests and happiness, and have their home in the inmost depths of the pure in heart. And they will continue to spread, until the islands, the oceans, and the continents obey; and until *non erit alia lex Romae, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia post hac, sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex, sempiterna et immortalis continebit*. Of all men, American scholars, and you among them, ought not to be ignorant of any thing which this book contains. If Cicero could declare that the laws of the twelve tables were worth all the libraries of the philosophers—if they were the *carmen necessarium* of the Roman youth, how laboriously, *manu nocturna diurnaue* ought you to investigate its contents, and inscribe them upon your hearts. You owe to them the blessed civil institutions under which you live, and the glorious freedom which you enjoy; and if these are to be perpetuated, it can only be by a regard to those principles. Civil and religious liberty is more indebted to Luther and Calvin, and their compeers of the Reformation, and to the Puritans and Protestants of England, and the Huegonots of France, than to any other men who ever lived in the annals of time. They led the way to that freedom and firmness, and independence of thought and investigation, and the adoption of these principles, as the guide in social government, as well as private actions, which created a personal self-respect

and firmness in its defence, which conducted us to a sense of equal rights and privileges, and eventually to the adoption of free written constitutions as the limitation of power. Be you imitators of them. Make your scholarship subservient to the support of the same unchanging principles. They are as necessary now as they ever were, to the salvation of your country and all that is dear to your hopes. The world is yet to be proselyted to them. Religion and liberty must go hand in hand, or America cannot be established; the bondage of the European man broken; Africa enlightened and Asia regenerated. And even here, we are not without peril. Look abroad; are not the pillars of our edifice shaken? Is not law disregarded? Are not moral and social principles weakened? Are not the wretched advocates of infidelity busy? The sun has indeed risen upon our mountain-tops, but it has not yet scattered the damps and the darkness of the valleys. The passions are roused and misled. Ancient institutions are scorned. Our refuge is in the firm purpose of educated and moral men. Draw then your rules of action from the only safe authority. Hang your banner on their outer wall. Stand by them in trial and in triumph. Dare to maintain them in every position and in every vicissitude; and make your appeal to the source from which they are drawn. And then come what may, contempt or fame, you cannot fall; and your progress, at every step will be greeted by the benedictions of the wise and good—SALVETE—SALVETE.

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